

# It's a Daily Double Starting Wednesday

## For Duxbury Lacrosse

BY MIKE HALLORAN

It was hard to tell if the emotional roller coaster Coach Chris Sweet had just ridden was taking more out of him than his painful broken leg, but he still managed to gather enough energy in the post-game interview to praise his opponent and his team in its dramatic 12-11 double-overtime win over Billerica (18-3) in the Eastern MA Division I semifinals on Sunday afternoon in Billerica.

In one of the most pressure-packed and hard fought games in the history of the Duxbury lacrosse program, the Dragons (17-4) rallied from a 9-6 third-quarter deficit and took the #2-seed into OT before winning it on junior Gus Quinzani's second goal of the game with 2:14 left in the second sudden-victory period.

"We were lucky to escape with a win today," said an exhausted and emotional Sweet. "They can go head-to-head with any of those New York teams we played earlier this year. That's a great lacrosse team we just beat."

It was a victory that will go down in school history, as it extended the Dragons' win streak to 72 games against MIAA schools, and it also sends them to their sixth consecutive State championship on Wednesday afternoon at Xaverian Brothers HS in Westwood (5 p.m.) with a shot at winning their fourth straight title.

A crowd of close to 1,500 was on hand on a spectacular spring day, and many of them were there to see if the Indians would finally break Duxbury's streak.

After the first four minutes of the game it looked like the streak was hardly in danger.

A Ben Cederberg goal 22 seconds into the game, and a pair of goals 20 seconds apart by Derek Sweet and Cederberg after less than four minutes had elapsed had Billerica Coach Chris Burns calling a timeout to calm his troops down.

When they came out of the break, the Indians looked like a totally different

team, answering with a trio of goals that had the game tied at 3-3 by the end of the quarter.

With the Billerica crowd back in the game and momentum on its side, the hosts grabbed the lead for the first time when Mike Slatton's shot dribbled across the goal line beneath Mike Seigfried at the 10:23 mark of the second quarter to make it 4-3.

The pressure on Seigfried was building, as Billerica face-off specialist Gary McKay repeatedly won face-offs, giving the Indians a serious advantage in possession time.

Midway through the period Billerica struck again, as Keith Merluzzo dragged a host of Duxbury defenders away from the slot, leaving Greg Melaugh alone in front where he beat Seigfried for a two-goal margin.

Scott Austin kept the Dragons within range, as he beat goaltender Pat O'Loughlin with 33 seconds to go. But Billerica countered with a McKay tally to make it 6-4.

What should have been a demoralizing goal against Duxbury did little to affect their play, as Cederberg notched his third of the half with 11 seconds left, sending Duxbury to the sidelines at halftime facing a 6-5 deficit.

Just over two minutes into the second half, Cederberg redirected an Austin pass from behind the net, beating senior defender Sam Anderson, who was having little luck in coverage.

"My fellow midfielder who was in the crease with me

allowed me to cut off him, and my defender was face-guarding me the whole game, so I just tried to cut off the pick," said Cederberg (5 goals). "It allowed me to get in the crease a lot. I made some and missed some, but it was giving me some good chances to finish."

While the game was now tied at 6-6, it didn't last that way for long, as McKay won another face-off and was in the box in no time, sending a pass to Mike Hurley, who found Melaugh to the side of the net for a goal that took just eight seconds.

Cederberg thought he had his fifth of the game with 6:48 left in the quarter, but a crease violation negated the tying goal and sent the ball back up field where Hurley made it 8-6.

Duxbury had no answer for McKay, whose mere presence in the face-off circle brought visions of yet another Billerica possession.

It had now reached the low point of the game for Duxbury when Adam Foss bounced a long shot over the right shoulder of Seigfried for a 9-6 lead with 3:49 to go, so it was time for some senior leadership in this time of serious trouble.

While it wasn't the way he would have liked to inspire his teammates, senior captain Bobby Barry did it the hard way, taking a pair of devastating hits that drew a man-up situation and allowed Sweet to slide one under O'Loughlin.

After surviving a man-down situation called with 2:18 left in the quarter, Duxbury was ready to make the fourth quarter a memorable one, as Troy Neville scored with 49 seconds to go to make it a one-goal game.

After killing off a Billerica foray to start the final 12 minutes, defenseman Mark Murphy went the full length of the field and behind the Indian net, where the exhausted junior found himself in trouble, prompting a Duxbury timeout.

It was the perfect move by Sweet, as the Dragons reorganized and set up Cederberg once again for the tying goal with 9:31 showing on the clock.

It was now a nine-minute contest with little margin for error.

The Dragons struck first when a revived Barry beat O'Loughlin with 5:58 to go to make it 10-9, but a costly turnover gave the ball to Billerica and a chance to tie.

Following a timeout, Lanny Ellis got his first of the game when he cut off a pick in the slot and fired one past Seigfried with 4:20 remaining.

Quinzani appeared to get the game-winner with 1:50 left, but Ellis responded just 18 seconds later to tie the game at 11-11.

The specter of McKay was always present, but the Dragons weathered the final Billerica attack in regulation, getting possession and driving back up field where they called a timeout with 21 seconds to go.

Sweet had possession in the left corner as the seconds ticked away, but a Billerica double-team flattened the Duxbury junior as the ball rolled away and into OT.

The first four-minute OT went scoreless, as Sweet was denied from point-blank range with 1:48 to go. But the best was yet to come.

Forced to kill off a man-down situation just 11 seconds into the second OT, the Dragons survived the one-minute penalty, as the Craig Sullivan-led defense sparked in front of Seigfried.



# Dragons Set to Defend Crown vs Xaverian

The Indians continued to attack, but sophomore Quinn Cully pulled off the defensive play of the season, as he stepped in front of a Billerica pass at midfield and picked it off in full stride, carrying it deep into the offensive zone and feeding Quinzani for the game-winner and another shot at a State title.

"You never know who is going to make the big play on this team. Quinn has been capable of doing it all year long," said Sweet. "It's unusual for a sophomore to make a big play like that. It couldn't have come at a better time. Everybody told these kids at the beginning of the

year that they couldn't do it because we had lost so many good players. But we have a little secret in Duxbury and that is we have a lot of good players just waiting for their turn."

On Friday the Dragons advanced to the semifinals by knocking off #6-seed Beverly, 1-5.

The Panthers were the last Massachusetts public high school team to knock off the Dragons, having interrupted Duxbury's streak of State championships when they won in 2003 on their home field, 8-7.



**HIGH FIVE:** Ben Cederberg raises his stick in celebration after beating Billerica goalie Paul O'Loughlin for one of his five goals during the Dragons' 12-11 double-overtime win.

*Photo by Mike Halloran*



**MINISTER OF DEFENSE:** Junior defenseman Craig Sullivan rushes the ball upfield during Sunday's action.



Quinn Cully pulled off the defensive play of the year in the overtime win



# Girls Capture So. Sectional Lacrosse Title

By MIKE HALLORAN

The girls' lacrosse team lived up to its #1-seed status on Friday afternoon at Chandler Field in Duxbury, as they beat #7-seeded Hopkinton, 12-10, to capture its first-ever Division II South Sectional championship.

The victory sends the Lady Dragons into the State finals on Thursday (TBA) at the winner of Winchester/Weston: both of who fell to Duxbury earlier in the season.

The win over the Hillies didn't come easy, as Coach Sue Paull must have thought she was dreaming in the first five minutes with her team trailing 3-0.

Looking anything but the #1 seed, the Lady Dragons literally watched Hopkinton's Cassie Rudden run down the field twice in the first 46 seconds to beat Stephanie Hoomis before a stunned hometown crowd.

It only got worse for Duxbury, as Brooke Pettengill cut across the crease and took a pass from Rudden, burying it past Hoomis and raising doubts

about the Lady Dragons' preparedness.

"They just wanted it more than we did," said Paull about the Hillie's fast start. "We didn't make any adjustments. We just stuck to our game plan. We have five or six attack players that are tough to close down and that was one of our strengths today."

It was now or never for the Lady Dragons, and Kara Oloskey made sure the game didn't get out of hand, whipping one past freshman netminder Mallory Bannon at the 18:18 mark and cutting the deficit to 3-1.

Oloskey's goal snapped the girls out of their funk, as they went on a 6-1 run over the next 13 minutes to forge a 7-4 lead.

Everyone was contributing on offense, but no one made it look as easy as junior Erin Levesque, who continued her amazing play-off performance by picking up the ball at mid-field on the ensuing face-off and racing through the Hopkinton defense to beat Bannon just 11 seconds later.

Momentum was clearly on Duxbury's side, as Hopkinton's adrenaline rush began to dissipate.

At the 14:10 mark senior Becca Woods tied the game at 3-3 when she took a pass from Meredith Poore, who had raced the full length of the field, leaving a trail of Hillie defenders in her wake.

Duxbury finally took its first lead of the game less than three minutes later when Liz Hetherington took a pass in the slot from Trish Babson, who continued to thread the needle all game long from behind the net.

Rudden continued to present all kinds of defensive match-up problems for Duxbury, but Hoomis found a way to stop her temporarily when she blocked the senior captain's point-blank shot, only to be beaten seven seconds later on a restart in front.

With the score tied, Levesque took it upon herself once more to break the stalemate, slashing her way through the Hopkinton defense and beating Bannon to start another four-goal blitz.

An Oloskey goal just over two minutes later forced Hopkinton Coach Jodi Dolan to call a timeout, but the break in the action did little to stop the Duxbury surge, as Babson and Leigh Tedeschi scored 42 seconds apart to make the score 8-4.

A pair of Hopkinton goals and another Tedeschi score in the final 4:27 left Duxbury ahead 9-6 at halftime.

What had been a high-scoring affair suddenly went into cruise control in the second half, as Paull decided to slow things down and work the clock.

"We tried to slow it down and take some time off the clock. We just didn't want to give up the lead," said Paull.

Over 10 minutes into the half, Levesque had seen enough, stepping in front of a Hopkinton clearing pass and bullying her way through three defenders to beat Bannon at the 14:45 mark for a 10-6 Duxbury lead.

The teams traded goals over the next seven minutes, with Oloskey scoring in close and Levesque making another spectacular midfield dash, while Pettengill and Rudden tallied for the Hillies.

Things began to tighten up, as Duxbury's lead shrank to 12-10 with 5:21 left in the game after goals by Jamie Dolan and Jennifer Tanenbaum.

At this juncture Paull called a strategic timeout to settle her troops down. When they came out of the break, the Lady Dragons did an excellent job of ball control, working the perimeter and shaving valuable time off the clock while earning a trip to the championship game.

"It was a total team effort. I can't pinpoint one player who was the MVP over another. It was everyone contributing to the win," said Paull. "Our main focus was to stop #25 (Rudden) and Jill Caramello did an outstanding job doing that."

The Lady Dragons arrived at Friday's semi-final game by virtue of their 8-6 win over Norwell last Tuesday.

The Clippers have been a problem for Duxbury the past two years, but after losing to the Lady Dragons twice this season they were the decided underdogs.

The visitors came out flying and should have had a comfortable lead in the first five minutes, but Hoomis held the fort until the Norwell attack slowed down.

A Maddie Doyle goal just two minutes into the game put Norwell ahead 1-0, and the score stood up for close to 12 minutes before Babson finally got Duxbury on the board with 10:57 left in the half.

The game went back and forth the remainder of the half, as Babson and Levesque had goals that were matched by Kate McDonald and Cara O'Connell, leaving the game tied 3-3 at the half.

It took Tedeschi just 25 seconds to put Duxbury ahead in the second half, but the Clippers wouldn't go away, as Jill Commett tied the game four minutes later.

The game had all the makings of an upset when Commett scored again with 15:16 to go to give Norwell a 5-4 lead.

Norwell had done an excellent job keeping Oloskey off the scoreboard, so it was critical that someone step up and take over the Duxbury offense.

Levesque recognized the

dire straits her teammates were in and promptly took over, racing like a mad bull through the Norwell defense and tying the game at 5-5 with 12:40 left in the game.

The junior wasn't about to stop there. Duplicating her mad dash of a minute earlier, Levesque wound her way through a maze of Clippers and fired a shot past goaltender

Katie O'Hara to put the Lady Dragons ahead 6-5.

Oloskey finally got on the board with what proved to be the game-winner, taking a feed from behind the net from Babson and beating O'Hara with 8:16 to go for a 7-5 lead.

Norwell had no intentions of cashing in their chips, as they came right back and narrowed the margin to 7-6 on a Jen Cronin goal less than a minute later.



Hoomis would come up with a big save with 2:53 remaining on a shot from O'Connell, triggering a Duxbury transition that resulted in a Liz Hetherington score with 2:03 left in the game that clinched the win.



**HISTORY MAKERS:** The Duxbury girls raise their championship trophy after beating Hopkinton, 12-10, for their first Division II South Sectional title. The Lady Dragons will play the winner of Winchester/Weston for the State crown.



**BASKET CATCH:** Trish Babson is stopped by Hopkinton's Mallory Bannon during Friday's 12-10 win.



**YOU DON'T SCARE ME:** Kara Oloskey pays little attention to her Hopkinton defender.

*Photos by Mike Halloran*



Erin Levesque has been the team's sparkplug during the playoffs.



**THIS ONE GOT AWAY:** Scott Austin watches as the ball rolls towards the sidelines.

*Photos by Mike Halloran*